

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-8 have been examined. Claims 4 and 5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over Richter. Claims 1-3 and 6-8 have been allowed. Claim 4 has been amended hereby. Claims 9 and 10 have been added hereby. Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in light of the above amendments and below remarks.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the allowance of claims 1-3 and 6-8. Claims 9 and 10 do not add any new matter and are amply supported by the specification. (See Page 11, Lines 29-35; Page 12, Lines 1-14).

Claims 4 and 5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over Richter. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Amended claim 4 explicitly requires that the “first braking member being engageable with said sounding element driving member, for suppressing a motion of said sounding element driving member by causing said sounding element driving part to slide therein to reduce mechanical noise of the sounding element driving member.” Applicants respectfully submit that this feature of the present invention is neither taught nor suggested by Richter.

Richter relates to a music box in which each tooth provided on the toothed disk strikes a metallic tongue (d) to produce a sound. Each tooth on the toothed disk is brought into contact with a spring damper (a) via a bend (a') in the damper. (See Richter, Figs. 1 and 2). The spring damper comes into contact with the metallic tongue (d) after it has been struck by a tooth in order to damp the vibration of the tongue.

Therefore, in Richter, the tooth is only brought into contact with the spring damper. It does not slide in the spring damper and the spring damper does not suppress the motion of the toothed disk. In contrast, Applicants' claimed braking member is "for suppressing a motion of said sounding element driving member by causing said sounding element driving part to slide therein to reduce mechanical noise of the sounding element driving member," as explicitly recited in amended claim 4. Richter does not teach or suggest either of these features of the present invention, as recited in independent claim 4.

Moreover, Richter does not teach or suggest any element to "reduce mechanical noise of the sounding element driving member," as recited in amended claim 4. Instead, Richter teaches one to reduce the vibration of its sounding element (d) (the mechanical tongue). Richter is completely silent with respect to even reporting that its driving member (toothed wheel) generates any noise, let alone how to suppress such noise.

Applicants' invention is patently distinguishable over Richter due to the "first braking member is engageable with the sounding element driving member, for suppressing the motion of the sounding element driving member by causing the sounding element driving part to slide therein," as explicitly recited in claim 4. The unique design of the present invention reduces mechanical noise using a simple construction (page 3, lines 22 and 24 of the specification) and allows the reduction of the speed of the sounding element driving member as desired (page 6, lines 3 and 4 thereof).

Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 4 on the basis of Richter is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 5, 9 and 10 depend directly or indirectly on amended claim 4. Therefore, all of the above arguments regarding claim 4 apply equally to dependent claims

5, 9 and 10. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 5, 9 and 10 on the basis of Richter is therefore respectfully requested.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

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Respectfully submitted,

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